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May 22, 1996

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(202) 828-5540

William Caton, Acting Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W., Room 222
Washington, D.C. 20554

RECEIVED

MAY 22 1996

Re: **Ex Parte Meeting with Wireless
Telecommunications Bureau Staff
PR Docket No. 92-235**

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

Dear Mr. Caton:

On behalf of the American Automobile Association (AAA), we hereby wish to report that various members of the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau staff toured the AAA Potomac Division Automobile Emergency Radio Service dispatch center at Fair Lakes, Virginia on May 21, 1996. The purpose of the tour was to provide the staff with information concerning how shared Part 90 radio frequencies are used.

A copy of written materials furnished during the tour is attached hereto, including a list of all attendees.

Please direct any questions concerning the foregoing to the undersigned.

Sincerely,

John A. Prendergast/RK

John A. Prendergast
Counsel for the American
Automobile Association

Encls.

cc: Michelle Farquhar (w/encl.)
Ralph Haller (w/o encl.)
David Horowitz (w/o encl.)
Ira Keltz (w/o encl.)
Robert McNamara (w/o encl.)
David Wye (w/o encl.)

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**FCC TOUR OF THE AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE
ASSOCIATION RADIO DISPATCH FACILITY**

MAY 21, 1996

Hosted By:

**AAA Potomac Division
12600 Fair Lakes Circle
Fair Lakes, Virginia
Robert Livingstone
Director - Automotive
Services**

Communications Counsel:

**John A. Prendergast
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PROPOSED AGENDA
FCC TOUR OF AAA POTOMAC FACILITY
MAY 21, 1996

- I. **Introductions** (Jim Kolstad)
- II. **Brief Explanations of AAA's Activities and Need for Radio:**
(Jim Kolstad, Susan Pikrallidas and Paul Kindschy)
 - A. **Demand for Radio** (Paul Kindschy, Gary Ruark)

Review Automobile Emergency Radio Service growth. Discuss AAA's radio network.

 - 1. Urban areas: Usage is so great that many clubs must use 800 MHz as well.
 - 2. Discussion of nature of tow calls, emergency responses.
 - 3. Discussion regarding patterns of use in urban areas.
 - 4. In rural areas AAA has readily shared pursuant to interservice coordination requests.
 - B. **Safety Aspects of Radio** (Club Representatives)
 - 1. AAA rescues motorists in freezing temperatures, storms, dangerous areas; response to children locked in cars; removes dangerous situations caused by disabled vehicles that could lead to further accidents, injuries.
 - 2. Threatening situations are prioritized. Radio allows AAA to respond quickly and call for additional assistance (police, fire, medical) if needed.

3. Certain Clubs patrol busy road ways, use radio to report trouble.
4. Tow trucks are used as "mobile cranes" and scout vehicles for government authorities in disasters-- radios allow them to report dangerous situations (downed power lines, damaged bridges) and respond where needed.
5. Certain Clubs are tied directly into 911 system.
6. Examples of radio use in urgent situations.

III. Tour (Bob Livingstone, Gary Ruark)

Dispatch Center: Demonstration of actual processing of trouble call, dispatch of response.

IV. Refreshments, Questions and Answers (All Attendees)

ATTENDEES

AAA

1. Jim Kolstad, Vice President - Public and Government Relations, AAA
2. Susan Pikrallidas, Managing Director - Government Relations, AAA
3. Paul Kindschy, Director - National Road Service, AAA
4. Gary Ruark, Frequency Coordinator - Automotive Emergency Radio Service
5. Lew Beman, Director - Emergency Road Service, AAA Carolinas
6. Sharon Supple, Director, Emergency Road Service Automobile Club of Southern California
7. Rich Towner, Director - Emergency Road Service, Maryland Division, AAA Mid Atlantic
8. Bob Livingstone, Director - Automotive Services, AAA Potomac
9. Ron Kosh, General Manager - AAA Potomac
10. Peter Fuerst, Supervisor - Emergency Road Service Communications California State Automobile Association
11. Jack Weber, Vice President - AAA Mid Atlantic

Counsel

John A. Prendergast, Esq., Blooston, Mordkofsky, Jackson & Dickens

Harold Mordkofsky, Esq., Blooston, Mordkofsky, Jackson & Dickens

Eugene Maliszewskyj - Director of Engineering - Private Radio
- Blooston, Mordkofsky, Jackson & Dickens

Marissa G. Repp, Hogan and Hartson

FCC

Ralph Haller, Deputy Chief - Wireless Telecommunications Bureau

David Horowitz, Private Wireless Division

Ira Keltz, Esquire, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau

Robert H. McNamara, Chief - Private Wireless Division

David P. Wye, Technical Advisor - Wireless Telecommunications
Bureau

I. OVERVIEW

AAA is a not-for-profit association, and is the largest membership organization in the United States other than the Catholic church. AAA has 39 million members served through 112 motor clubs throughout the United States and Canada. 92% of AAA members join the Association because of emergency road service. Reliable communications between the AAA dispatcher and the emergency road service vehicle are essential in providing prompt and effective service, especially in potentially hazardous situations.

FCC Chairman Reed Hundt has recognized AAA's role as a protector of the motoring public's safety. In his statement announcing the creation of the Commission's Consumer Protection Branch, Chairman Hundt said "The FCC is the AAA of the Information Highway . . ." See Attached FCC News Release dated January 23, 1996.

II. AAA'S NEED FOR SHARED CHANNEL RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

A. Demand for Radio

The Automobile Emergency Radio Service was created in 1952. Over the years, AAA has had to lobby the Commission for additional spectrum, as road service radio calls have increased geometrically in volume. Currently, AAA's radio network includes approximately 540 base stations in the United

States, communicating with approximately 36,600 road service vehicles.

1. **Urban areas:** Usage is so great that capacity on shared channels is exhausted. As a result, many clubs have had to utilize 800 MHz as well. AAA is exploring ways to supplement its network with digital data capability, in order to make more efficient use of spectrum. However, operators have found that voice communication capability is still needed because data is cumbersome to use, and a safety hazard in a moving vehicle. Efficiency gains will allow AAA to accommodate increased call volume in future, and relieve present system congestion. It will also allow AAA to increase number of towing contractors, thereby improving service and reducing call response time. Moreover, AAA could continue trend of relieving governmental entities of road service responsibilities, by contracting to handle all traffic clearance and stranded motorist calls.

2. **Number of tow calls, emergency responses:** Last year, AAA clubs handled 47 road service calls per minute (which is .79 calls per second, or a call every 1.5 seconds) In the 13 counties served by the Automobile Club of Southern California alone, 4.1 million calls for assistance are received annually, requiring radio dispatch in some fashion. Of calls coming from AAA members, the Southern California Club receives more than

37,400 requests each year involving personal safety issues. The average response time is 13 minutes for such calls, because dispatch radio allows AAA to reach the nearest available response vehicle, and direct it to the situation.

3. In urban and suburban areas, radio channels are constantly busy. However, in rush hour, hot weather, cold weather, and any sort of storm conditions, radio use increases dramatically, often occupying all frequencies virtually sixty minutes out of each hour. Because of the need for ongoing communications during dispatch (to direct the truck to the site, advise the driver of changed circumstances, advise the dispatcher of response progress, or call for police, fire, EMS or other assistance), a few dozen vehicles can fully occupy a channel.

4. In rural areas, AAA has readily shared auto club frequencies pursuant to inter-service coordination requests. Often, channels are made available to police departments and public utilities.

B. Safety Aspect

1. **"Routine" Safety Duties:** AAA rescues motorists in freezing temperatures, storms, and dangerous areas;

responds to children locked in cars; removes dangerous situations caused by disabled vehicles that could lead to further accidents and injuries. Auto clubs thereby directly relieve a substantial burden on state and local governmental agencies.

2. **Priority Safety Related Dispatching:** Threatening situations are prioritized. Radio allows AAA to respond quickly and call for additional assistance (police, fire, rescue, and medical) if needed. Priorities include children locked in vehicles; members stranded in dangerous areas, or personally confronted with safety risks; vehicles disabled in traffic lanes of a freeway or highway (where traffic congestion can occur and risk of member being hit by another car is high); and members faced with medical emergencies or other safety problems (including danger of vehicle fire, etc.). Every break down on a high speed road is a potential life-threatening situation, due to the danger that another vehicle will either hit the disabled car, or hit the occupants who have exited the car to seek help. Indeed, a AAA Mid-Atlantic driver was killed last year on the Baltimore Beltway while trying to assist a motorist. AAA vehicles, often the first on an accident scene, frequently must use their radios to summon emergency medical assistance or police response. Unfortunately, roadways have also become a haven for crime, especially at night or on less-

travelled roads. By using radio to dispatch the closest tow vehicle, AAA is able to dramatically reduce the time during which stranded motorists are exposed to the dangers of assault or robbery. In this regard, a AAA Carolinas driver recently saved a woman who was cornered in a telephone booth by would-be assailants.

3. **Proactive Safety Patrols:** Radio allows AAA clubs to patrol busy road ways proactively (often in economical light utility vehicles), reporting trouble. For example, AAA Mid-Atlantic patrols the interstate and expressway in the Philadelphia area during the morning and afternoon rush hours. Service is provided to members and non-members in an effort to clear the roadway of vehicles creating hazardous conditions. Accidents and other emergencies are reported by radio to the AAA dispatcher, who then contacts the appropriate government agency. The Auto Club of Michigan has offered free towing service to the public on major roadways during snow storms. The Connecticut Motor Club has used its trucks to patrol roadways during dangerous ice storms, reporting accidents, injuries, downed power lines, and other hazards to the police and fire departments. The Club's trucks were among the only vehicles able to negotiate the icy roadways.

4. **Disaster Relief:** Tow trucks are used as "mobile

cranes" and scout vehicles for government authorities in disasters--radios allow them to report dangerous situations, such as damaged bridges, vehicle fires, and citizens stranded in dangerous situations. The trucks can respond where needed, because they are radio dispatched. AAA played a key role in assisting authorities in the following recent disasters:

- a. Hurricane Andrew
- b. Oakland Fires
- c. Los Angeles Riots
- d. Blizzard of 1996
- e. Laguna Fires
- f. 1995 Los Angeles floods and mud slides
- g. Los Angeles Earth Quake -- 1994
- h. Mississippi River Floods
- i. Hurricane Hugo

The California Automobile Association serving northern California, is an important member of the Regional Incident Management Program established by authorities for that area. During the San Francisco earthquake, the Club's radio system was one of the few means of communications still working, and allowed the Club to serve as a back up command post for local authorities. During Hurricane Andrew, southern auto clubs used radio to relay information about displaced families, helping them to find shelter and food. During Hurricane Hugo, AAA Carolinas equipped its vehicles with chain saws so they could help clear roadways.

5. Cooperation with Police: Certain clubs are tied directly into the 911 emergency response system. Many

government public safety agencies share direct telephone circuits with AAA clubs to facilitate prompt response to emergency situations. The California Highway Patrol automatically transfers all freeway call box calls from AAA members directly to the AAA call center. Clubs are currently working with state and local police departments to further relieve the burden on these agencies created by automobile emergencies. For example, AAA Carolinas is currently negotiating with the Charlotte Police Department to provide emergency road service for the city. Charlotte has requested that AAA Carolinas provide this service, because it can do so more efficiently and at a lower cost, allowing Charlotte to devote scarce resources to other public safety uses.

As indicated in the attached materials from the Automobile Club of Southern California, this Club alone handles nearly 300,000 automobile emergency call each year directly from public safety/law enforcement personnel. This is in addition to those calls made directly by its members. All clubs prioritize any call received directly from such public safety agencies.

C. Specific Examples

We have included above a few of the many specific instances in which AAA has relied on its radio operations to render assistance to the public in hazardous situations. Additional details on specific examples of safety related responses are provided in Attachment A hereto. We will also show attendees a videotaped interview with the mother of a young girl with cystic fibrosis, whose oxygen was accidentally locked in their car. AAA was able to respond within minutes thanks to radio dispatch, to alleviate the girl's breathing difficulties.

D. Growth of Radio Use

As shown in the attached call volume report, the Automobile Club of Southern California, alone, has seen geometric growth in radio use for automobile emergency dispatches. The annual call volume has increased by 1,200,000 calls since 1991, representing a 40 percent increase between 1991 and 1995. This Club projects similar growth for the foreseeable future, in highway-dependent Southern California. Similarly, AAA Carolinas projects double digit growth annually, especially in areas such as Charlotte, North Carolina, which is among the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the country. Therefore, it is vital that AAA's access to spectrum continue to grow. Use of digital data for

initial dispatching has allowed the clubs to focus voice radio use on those functions which cannot be as quickly or reliably accomplished through data massaging. Efficiency gains from narrowbanding will further help to meet the dramatic rise in call volume experienced in recent years. However, spectrum auctions could disrupt this process and jeopardize AAA's ability as a not for profit organization to continue meeting the safety needs of the motoring public.

III. AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The Automobile Club of Southern California is one of the largest and most active auto clubs in the country. Attachment B hereto provides relevant information about this Club's radio system, and the safety related services it provides using both shared and 800 MHz frequencies.

IV. SUMMARY

Because of the vital role that the shared Automobile Emergency Radio Service frequencies play in providing valuable safety-related services to the public, and because of the state and local government resources saved by these services, it is vital that these channels continue be available for auto club use. These frequencies should not be auctioned; moreover, these channels should not be made available to all potential users through frequency pool consolidation. Instead, the current eligibility restrictions should be retained.



NEWS

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1919 - M Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20554**

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Report No. CC 96-3

COMMON CARRIER ACTION

January 23, 1996

FCC ANNOUNCES CONSUMER PROTECTION BRANCH Hundt Calls FCC the "Triple A" of the Information Highway

FCC Chairman Reed Hundt and Common Carrier Bureau Chief Regina Keeney today announced the newly named Consumer Protection Branch. This office, which now handles 50,000 telephone and written complaints and inquiries from consumers each year, is part of the Bureau's Enforcement Division and was previously known as the Informal Complaints and Public Inquiries Branch. The Common Carrier Bureau also announced the issuance of five Notices of Apparent Liability for alleged violations of the FCC's slamming rules (see separate release) based on consumer complaints received by the Consumer Protection Branch.

Chairman Hundt said, "The FCC is the 'Triple A' of the Information Highway and just like that organization, our mission is to provide information to help consumers choose their routes and to help them with problems once they are on the road. The Branch's new name presents this mission statement clearly and concisely. The slamming actions announced today should also serve notice to consumers and the industry that the FCC is committed to vigorously enforcing the rules of the road."

"We are taking every step we can to be more accessible to consumers and carriers," said Keeney. "In the last six months, we've increased our complaint caseload processing by nearly 50%. We are improving and streamlining telephone access to the Branch, improving our consumer and carrier literature, and increasing our reach through non-traditional means including the Internet and targeted communities of interest such as senior citizens."

Each year the Consumer Protection Branch receives approximately 25,000 written consumer complaints about interstate telephone service along with 30,000 phone calls, hundreds of additional complaints referred to the agency by members of Congress and e-mail inquiries. The Consumer Protection Branch investigates each individual complaint and also opens investigations into patterns of abuse by particular companies and in certain areas.

The Chief of the Enforcement Division, John Muleta, described the name change as one of the many steps the Branch is taking to reflect its role in the new era of competitive telecommunication services. "The name change is important because it gives consumers an easy point of reference about whom to contact with their concerns," Muleta said. "Remember that increased competition in telecommunications means consumers will have more choices."

(over)

However, having more choices also means consumers will need more information to make the right decisions. The Branch can provide consumers with the information they need and its new name should help consumers find us faster."

Consumer Protection Branch activities include the following:

- o **Common Carrier's Scorecard report**
The new *Common Carrier Scorecard*, released in the fall of 1995, provides the public with information about the number and nature of complaints received by the Consumer Protection Branch and the level of complaints generated by carriers. The Scorecard also provides consumers with advice about avoiding the problems described in the report.
- o **Slamming**
The information the Consumer Protection Branch collected from consumer complaints and carrier responses regarding the unauthorized change of long distance service, "slamming," was instrumental in leading to the changes in FCC rules governing the marketing of long distance services. These changes were adopted in June and took effect in September. A team composed of Consumer Protection Branch and the Formal Complaints Branch staff members is responsible for investigating consumer slamming complaints alleging egregious behavior on the part of carriers or their agents. This work has so far led to a series of Notices of Apparent Liability to be issued against the responsible carriers. In addition, the Branch's public education campaign has alerted consumers to the problem of slamming and the need to monitor phone bills and promotional material.
- o **Operator Services Providers**
The Consumer Protection Branch's consumer complaint data in this area is helping the Commission formulate new policies and rules regarding OSP services. In addition, the Branch's data has helped the Enforcement Division to investigate the rate practices of several OSP carriers by identifying those carriers that have generated high levels of consumer complaints and whose rates appear to be excessive. These investigations have resulted in a few of the carriers voluntarily improving their marketing and pricing programs. The Branch has also embarked on an aggressive public education campaign has reminded OSP consumers to STOP, LOOK and LISTEN before using a public phone.

Attachment A

SAFETY RELATED RESPONSES IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

MEMBERS' ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF OUTSTANDING SERVICE

Dear Mr. and Mrs. [Name],
I am writing to you to express my appreciation for the outstanding service you have provided for me and my family. I have been a member of the [Organization] for many years and I have always found the service to be excellent. I am sure that you will continue to provide the same high quality service in the future.

Sincerely,
[Name]

Dear Mr. and Mrs. [Name],
I am writing to you to express my appreciation for the outstanding service you have provided for me and my family. I have been a member of the [Organization] for many years and I have always found the service to be excellent. I am sure that you will continue to provide the same high quality service in the future.

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Sincerely,
[Name]

STATIONS COMMENDED FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE BY ACSC

Scott McVick, Darren Hill and James Landon of Lakewood World Union, Scott Ranch.

An elderly woman lost control of her vehicle and crashed into a bus stop, trapping people beneath her car. After calling the dispatcher to contact 911, Scott, James and Darren used their own jacks to lift the weight of the vehicle off of the injured pedestrians and then tried to console them until help arrived. Upon arrival of the paramedics, the drivers assisted in preparing the victims for helicopter transport. The incident was later picked up by the L.A. Times and other publications.

After a number of attempts to get a truck started, the member was stuck in a truck.... dispatch called 911 because the member was starting to become ill. ...the station was finally able to open the truck and get the member's insulin. By the time the paramedics arrived, she was feeling much better.

During the heavy rain season of early 1998, he received a call from a man who got his truck stuck in a wash. His girlfriend was unable to get out due to the rushing water. The call was dispatched as "NOT" and Scott Landon of Lakewood's Woodmont Division, Woodmont quickly responded. ...his wheel-drive vehicle was already submerged in water up to its doors.... he secured the entry to the vehicle and then helped the woman out of the vehicle. Hanging on to the side, James led the woman to safety.

Attachment B

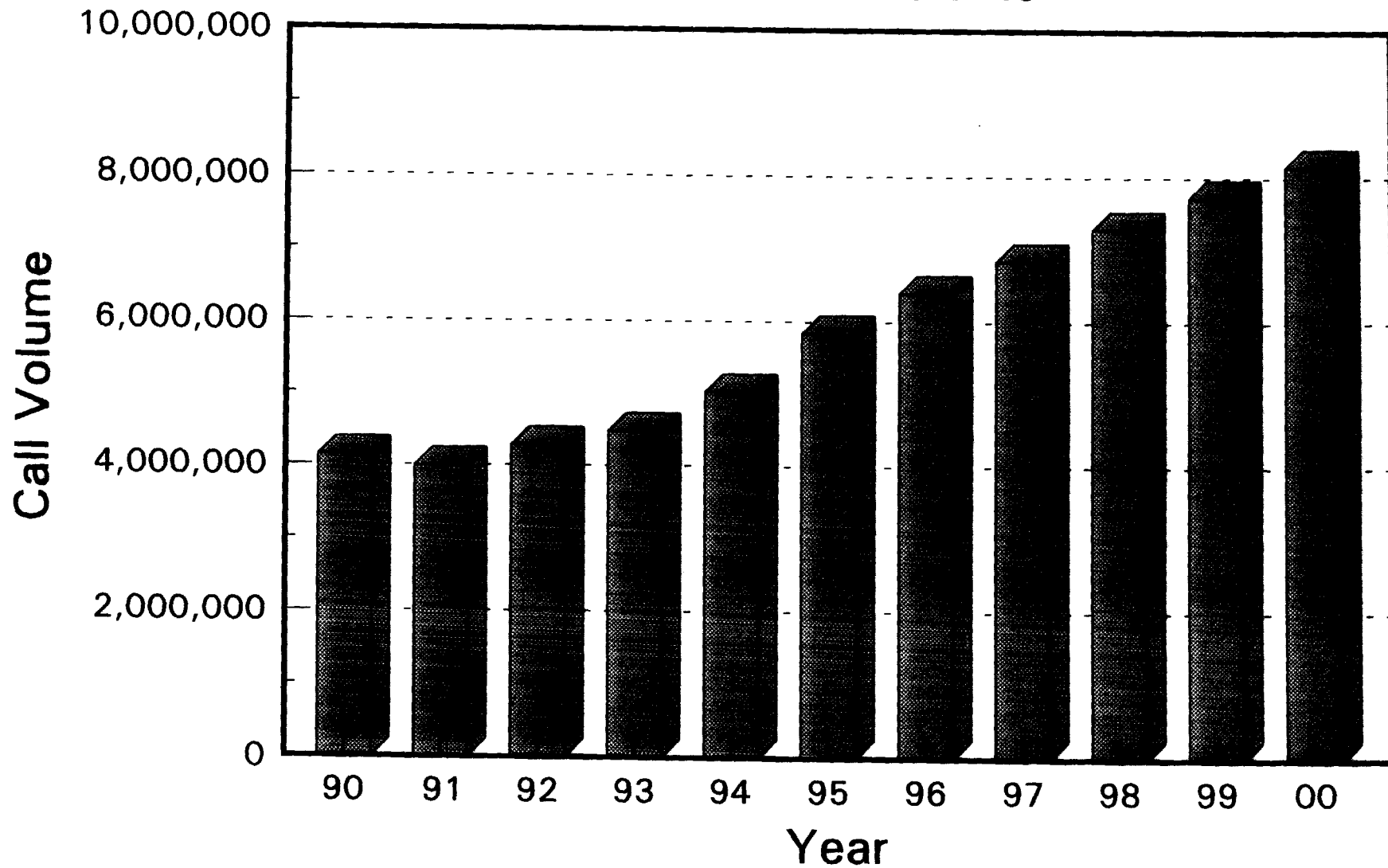
**INFORMATION REGARDING RADIO USE BY THE
AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

Automobile Club of Southern California

- ◆ **Not-for-profit motor club**
- ◆ **40 percent of all households in southern California's 13 counties are members**
- ◆ **With 4.2 million members, ACSC is the largest affiliate of the American Automobile Association's 112 affiliated clubs in the U.S. and Canada**
- ◆ **Service territory covers more than 74,000 square miles in southern California**
- ◆ **Receives more than 5.8 million calls annually from members in four regionally located ERS call centers**

Automobile Club of Southern California

Annual Received Call Volume



1996 - 2000 Estimated

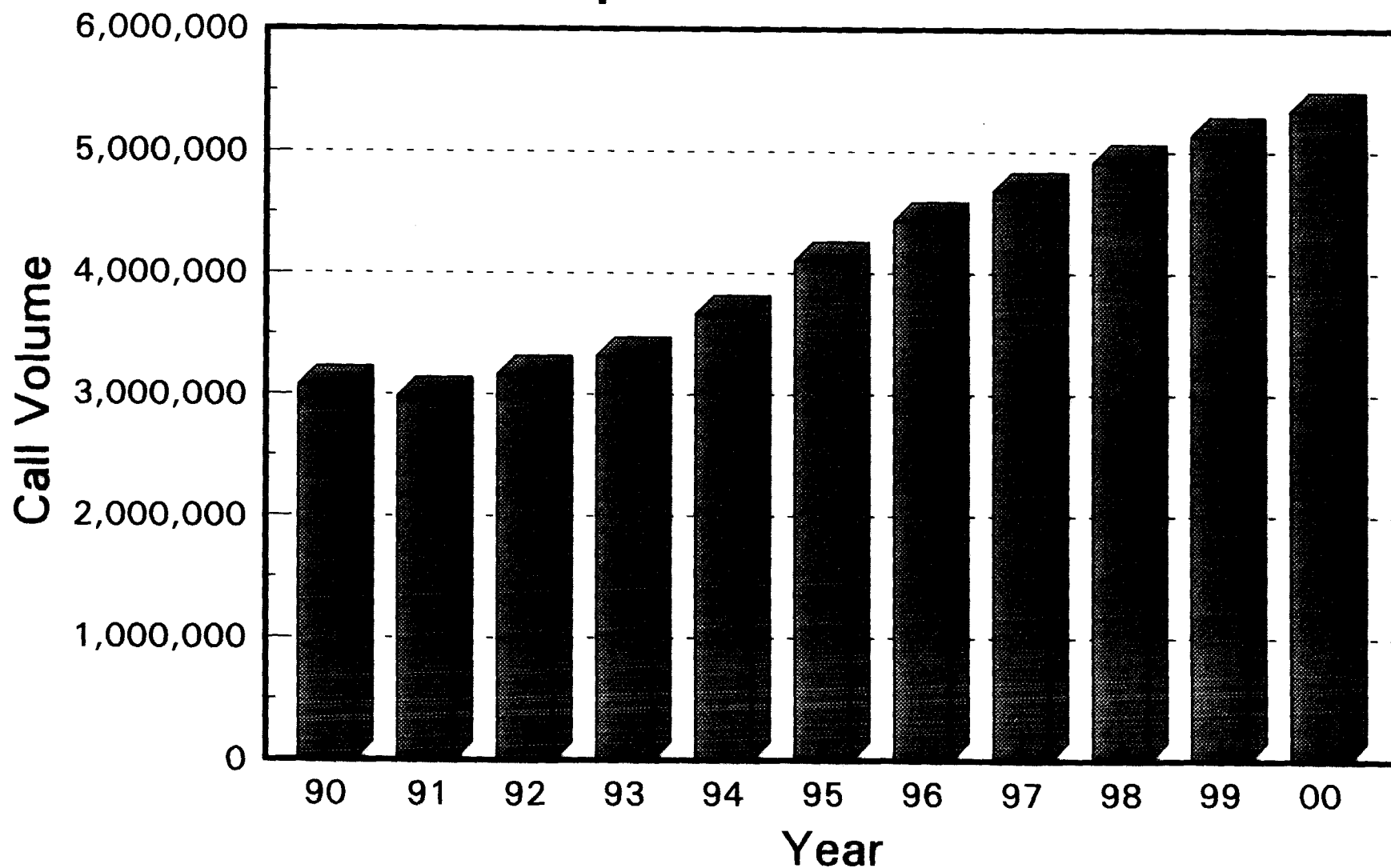
Automobile Club of Southern California

- I. Services more than 4.1 million members annually through sophisticated ERS call centers and radio communication infrastructure**
 - A. Average service response time for all members is less than 20 minutes**

- II. Services more than 300,000 people annually requesting roadside assistance through public agencies via dedicated telephone lines with all southern California public safety organizations and direct contact with members calling from freeway call boxes**
 - A. Average service response time is less than 17 minutes when assistance is requested by a public agency**

Automobile Club of Southern California

Annual Dispatched Call Volume



1996 - 2000 Estimated